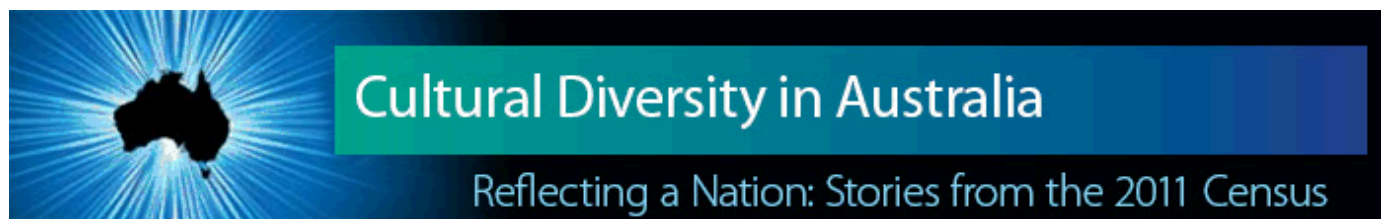




# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 2071.0 - Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013

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The Australian Census of Population and Housing is a rich source of data about Australians and their cultural characteristics. In 2011, the Census revealed that over a quarter (26%) of Australia's population was born overseas and a further one fifth (20%) had at least one overseas-born parent. Throughout the 100 years since the first National Census in 1911, migrants have made up a large component of the Australian population. Historically, the majority of migration has come from Europe, however, there are increasingly more Australians who were born in Asia and other parts of the world. This pattern of migration is evident in the make up of the richly diverse society which has been recorded in the 2011 Census. This diversity can be seen in the variety of languages, religions, ancestries and birthplaces reported by Australians.

Although this article focuses on the overseas-born population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples also contribute greatly to the cultural diversity of Australia. Further analysis of Census data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia can be found in **Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2011** (cat. no. 2075.0).

### Generations in Australia

First generation Australians are people living in Australia who were born overseas. This is a diverse group of people including Australian citizens, permanent residents and long-term temporary residents. In 2011, there were 5.3 million first generation Australians (27% of the population)(a).

Second generation Australians are Australian-born people living in Australia, with at least one overseas-born parent. In 2011, there were 4.1 million second generation Australians (20% of the population)(a).

Third-plus generation Australians are Australian-born people whose parents were both born in Australia. One or more of their grandparents may have been born overseas or they may have several generations of ancestors born in Australia. This group also includes most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2011, there were 10.6 million third-plus generation Australians (53% of the population)(a).

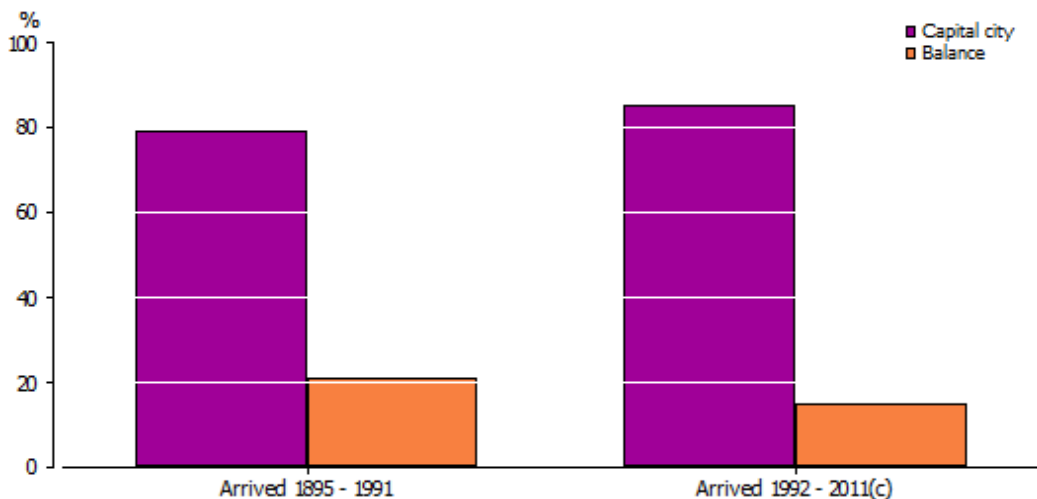
(a) In the 2011 Census 1.6 million Australians did not state either their birthplace or their parents' birthplace. Therefore their generation cannot be identified from Census data. These people have been excluded prior to the calculation of percentages for generations in Australia.

### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

In 2011, 82% of the overseas-born population lived in capital cities compared with 66% of all people in Australia. Some of the factors affecting where migrants choose to live are the location of family members or people with the same ethnic background, the point of entry into the country, the economic attractiveness of the destination in terms of employment opportunities, and certain visa conditions. **(Endnote 1) (Endnote 2)**

Within the overseas-born population, those who arrived in Australia in the past 20 years were more likely to live in a capital city than those who arrived before 1992 (85% compared to 79%). The likelihood of living in a capital city decreased for each successive generation; just over three-quarters of second generation Australians and just over half of the third-plus generation lived in capital cities. Perth, Sydney and Melbourne had the highest proportion of overseas-born people, over a third each. In contrast, less than 14% of people in Hobart were overseas-born, the lowest proportion for all capital cities. Although the age distribution differs between the overseas-born, second generation and third-plus generation, adjusting for this only makes a small difference to the patterns shown.

**Capital city and non-capital city balance for first generation (overseas-born) Australians(a)(b)**

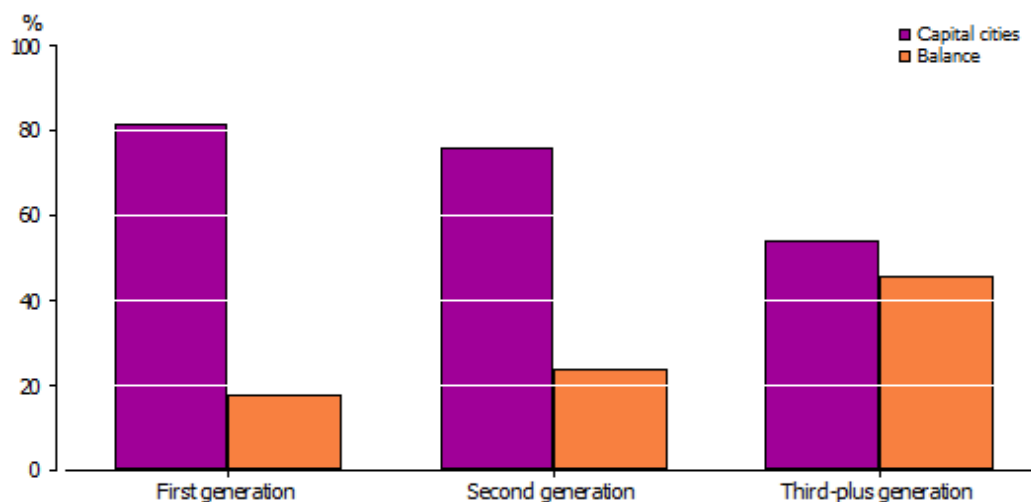


(a) Greater Capital Cities Statistical Areas as defined in the **Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)**. They are based on a broad economic definition of capital cities and incorporate some areas on the fringes of cities which were not included in previous classifications. Capital cities in this table may therefore be defined differently than in published data from previous Censuses.

(b) People with 'No Usual Address' were excluded prior to calculations.

(c) Includes people who arrived in Australia over the period 1992 to Census Night (9 August) 2011.

**Capital city and non-capital city balance by generation in Australia(a)(b)**



(a) Greater Capital Cities Statistical Areas as defined in the **Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)**. They are based on a broad economic definition of capital cities and incorporate some areas on the fringes of cities which were not included in previous classifications. Capital cities in this table may therefore be defined differently than in published data from previous Censuses.

(b) People with 'No Usual Address' were excluded prior to calculations.

### How the Census measures cultural background

The 2011 Census asked several questions which help to provide a picture of Australia's cultural profile. These included:

- In which country was the person born?
- Was the person's father born in Australia or overseas?
- Was the person's mother born in Australia or overseas?
- If born overseas - In what year did the person first arrive in Australia to live here for one year or more?
- What is the person's ancestry? (Provide up to two ancestries only).
- Is the person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?
- Does the person speak a language other than English at home?
- How well does the person speak English?
- What is the person's religion?

## COUNTRY OF BIRTH

From colonial times, patterns of migration to Australia have been shaped by historical events and policies both in Australia and other parts of the world. In particular, the successive waves of migration since World War II have contributed to the make up of the overseas-born population in Australia in 2011. Initially most of these migrants were born in countries in North-West Europe and these were then followed by large numbers of migrants born in Southern and Eastern Europe.

**(Endnote 3)** However, the proportion of the overseas-born population originating from Europe has been in decline in recent years, from 52% in 2001 to 40% in 2011.

In the 1970s, many migrants arrived in Australia from South-East Asia and in recent migration streams a number of Asian countries have made a large contribution. **(Endnote 3)** Reflecting this trend, the proportion of migrants born in Asia increased from 24% of the overseas-born population in 2001 to 33% in 2011. The proportion of the overseas-born population arriving from countries outside Europe and Asia has also increased.

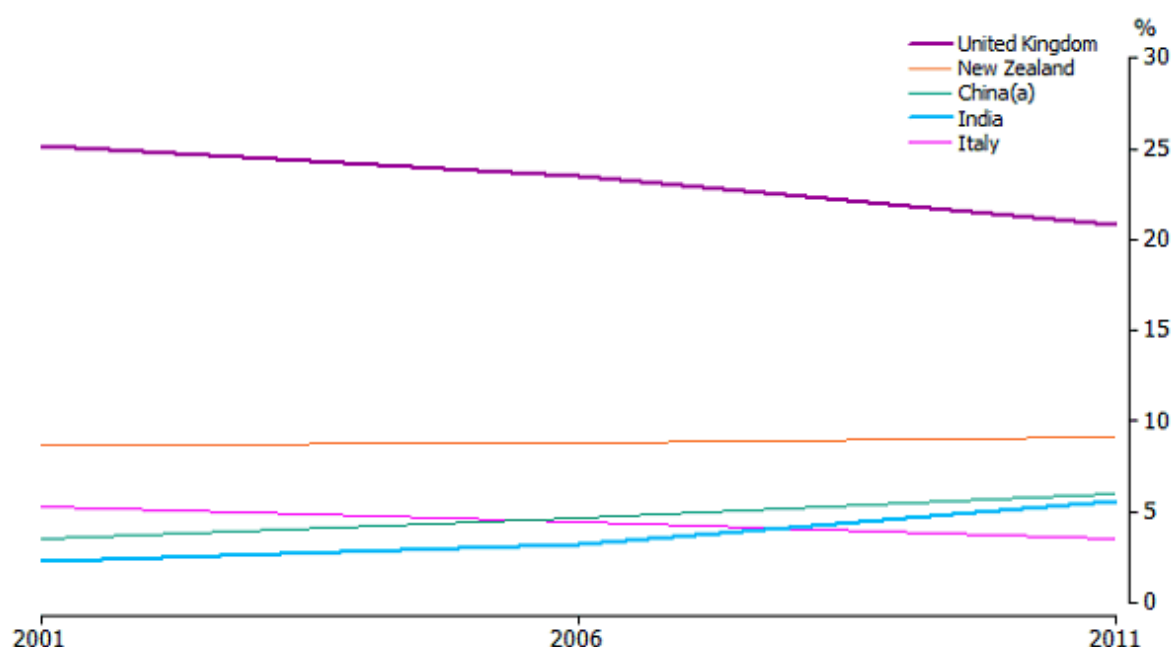
## TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF BIRTH FOR THE OVERSEAS-BORN POPULATION, SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Country of birth	Persons '000	Proportion of all overseas-born %	Median age years	Sex ratio(a)
United Kingdom	1 101.1	20.8	54	101.7
New Zealand	483.4	9.1	40	102.8
China(b)	319.0	6.0	35	79.8
India	295.4	5.6	31	125.2
Italy	185.4	3.5	68	104.7
Vietnam	185.0	3.5	43	84.6
Philippines	171.2	3.2	39	60.6
South Africa	145.7	2.8	39	96.9
Malaysia	116.2	2.2	39	83.5
Germany	108.0	2.0	62	90.6
Born elsewhere overseas	2 183.8	41.2	44	95.6
<b>Total overseas-born</b>	<b>5 294.2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>96.1</b>

(a) Number of males per 100 females.

(b) Excludes Special Administrative Regions and Taiwan Province.

### 2011 Top 5 countries of birth as a proportion of total overseas-born population, 2001-2011



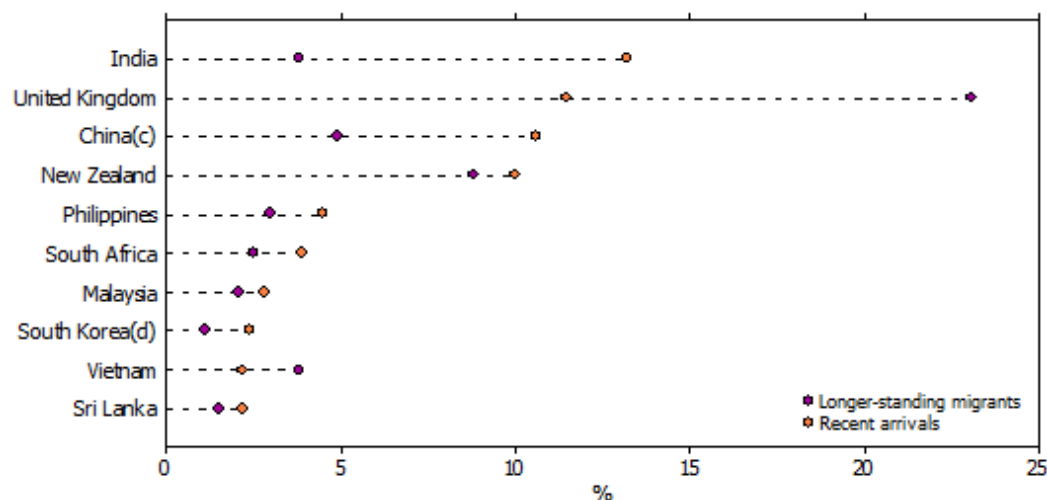
(a) Excludes Special Administrative Regions and Taiwan Province.

In 2011, the United Kingdom was the leading country of birth for the overseas-born population (21%). It was followed by New Zealand (9.1%), China (6.0%), India (5.6%) and Italy (3.5%). The most common countries of birth differed according to when migrants arrived in Australia. For longer-standing migrants (those who arrived before 2007) almost a quarter were born in the United Kingdom. The top 10 birthplaces for longer-standing migrants included four Asian and four European countries. However, the pattern differed for recent arrivals (those who arrived between 2007 and Census Night in 2011) with India being the leading birthplace for this group (13%). It was closely followed by the United Kingdom (12%), the only European country in the top 10 birthplaces for recent arrivals. Seven of the remaining countries for recent arrivals were Asian.

**Recent arrivals** are those who arrived in Australia over the period 2007 to Census Night (9 August) 2011.

**Longer-standing migrants** are people who arrived in Australia before 2007.

## Selected countries of birth(a), proportion of recent arrivals and longer-standing migrants by birth country(b)



(a) Top 10 countries of birth for recent arrivals.

(b) For example, people born in India accounted for 4% of longer-standing migrants and 13% of recent arrivals.

(c) Excludes Special Administrative Regions and Taiwan Province.

(d) Korea, Republic of (South).

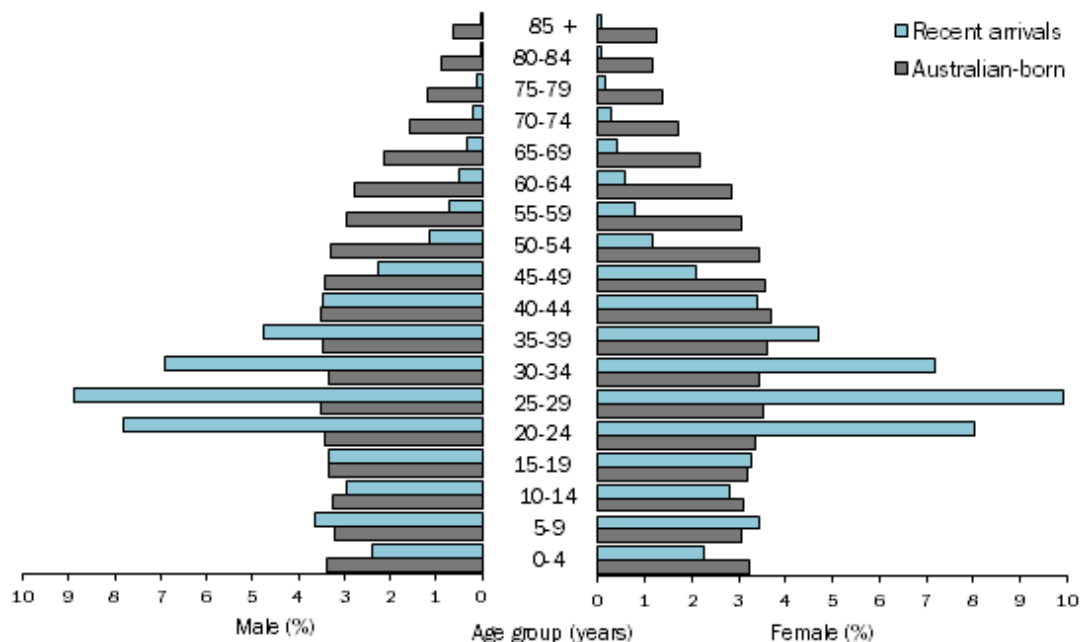
Recent arrivals make up a large proportion of some population groups in Australia, reflecting the increasing number of people born in Asian countries. Recent arrivals accounted for 47% of the total Indian-born population in Australia and 35% of the total Chinese-born population. In contrast, only 11% of the total United Kingdom-born population were recent arrivals.

Country of birth groups which increased the most between 2001 and 2011 were India (up 200,000 people), China (176,200) and New Zealand (127,700). The largest decreases were seen in the birth countries of Italy (less 33,300 people), Greece (16,500) and Poland (9,400). These decreases can be attributed to deaths and low current migration levels replenishing these groups.

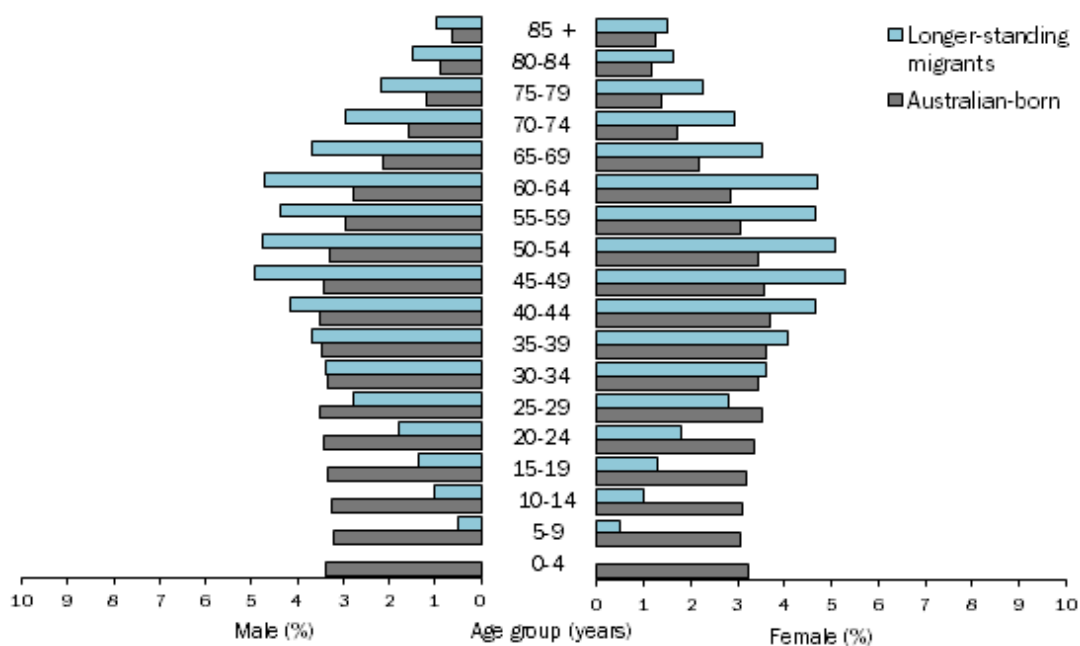
At the time of the 2011 Census, the median age for Australians counted in the Census was 37 years. Not surprisingly, longer-standing migrants had a much older age profile, with a median age of 50 years. As this group all arrived before 2007, it didn't include anyone under 5 years of age. Recent arrivals were considerably younger with a median age of 27 years. Their younger age distribution partly reflects criteria for Australian skilled migration visas which require successful applicants, in most cases, to be aged under 50 years. **(Endnote 2)**

Of the leading 10 birthplaces, the oldest median ages were for people born in Italy (68 years), Germany (62 years), and the United Kingdom (54 years), reflecting earlier European migration.

## 2011 Census age and sex distribution: recent arrivals and Australian-born



## 2011 Census age and sex distribution: longer-standing migrants and Australian-born



In 2011, there were 98 males per 100 females in Australia (this is known as the sex ratio). The number of males relative to females varied between birthplace groups for the overseas-born population. The groups with the highest sex ratio included Nepal (144 - that is, 144 Nepalese-born men for every 100 Nepalese-born women in Australia), Afghanistan (143) and Pakistan (143). The countries with the lowest ratio of males to females included Japan (47), Thailand (49) and the Russian Federation (60).

## ANCESTRY

Ancestry is not necessarily related to a person's place of birth but is an indication of the cultural group that they most closely identify with. It gives insight into the cultural background of both the Australian-born and overseas-born populations when ancestry differs from country of birth. The 2011 Census asked respondents to provide a maximum of two ancestries with which they most closely identify. As an example, they were asked to consider the origins of their parents and grandparents.

Over 300 ancestries were separately identified in the 2011 Census. The most commonly reported were English (36%) and Australian (35%). A further six of the leading ten ancestries reflected the European heritage in Australia with the two remaining ancestries being Chinese (4%) and Indian (2%).

Just under a third (32%) of people who responded to the ancestry question reported two ancestries. Second generation Australians were the generation most likely to report a second ancestry (46%). This may be due to having a strong connection to Australia and also to a parent's country of birth. Third-plus generation Australians were less likely (36%) to report a second ancestry. As both the respondent and their parents were Australian-born, they may be less likely to have a connection to more than one country. The group least likely to report a second ancestry were first generation Australians (14%).

The vast majority of people who reported an Australian ancestry were born in Australia (98%). For most other ancestries, the majority of people were born either in Australia or the country associated with their ancestry. The European ancestries in the top 10 ancestry groups follow this pattern. For example, 83% of people who reported German ancestry were born in Australia and 10% were born in Germany. Only 7% were born in other countries. This pattern differed for the Asian countries in the top 10 ancestry groups. For example, for those who reported Chinese ancestry, 36% were born in China, 26% in Australia and 38% born in other countries. Of those who reported Indian ancestry, 61% were born in India, 20% in Australia and 19% born in other countries.

## SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF ANCESTRY GROUPS

Ancestry	Generations in Australia					Also stated another ancestry %
	Persons(a) '000	Proportion of total population	First generation	Second generation	Third-plus generation	
			%	%	%	
English	7 238.5	36.1	18.5	20.1	61.4	53.5
Australian	7 098.5	35.4	2.0	18.3	79.6	38.5
Irish	2 087.8	10.4	12.9	13.9	73.2	80.4
Scottish	1 792.6	8.9	17.1	19.1	63.8	78.3
Italian	916.1	4.6	24.1	41.0	34.9	44.3
German	898.7	4.5	17.3	19.8	62.9	75.4
Chinese	866.2	4.3	74.3	21.3	4.4	16.2
Indian	390.9	2.0	79.8	18.6	1.6	12.9
Greek	378.3	1.9	30.9	44.8	24.3	26.2
Dutch	335.5	1.7	32.5	43.3	24.2	55.1

(a) Table presents collective responses to ancestry question. As some people stated two ancestries, the total persons for all ancestries exceed Australia's total population.

## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Since the first Census, the majority of Australians have reported an affiliation with a Christian religion. However, there has been a long-term decrease in affiliation to Christianity from 96% in 1911 to 61% in 2011. Conversely, although Christian religions are still predominant in Australia, there have been increases in those reporting an affiliation to non-Christian religions, and those reporting 'No Religion'.

In the past decade, the proportion of the population reporting an affiliation to a Christian religion decreased from 68% in 2001 to 61% in 2011. This trend was also seen for the two most commonly

reported denominations. In 2001, 27% of the population reported an affiliation to Catholicism. This decreased to 25% of the population in 2011. There was a slightly larger decrease for Anglicans from 21% of the population in 2001 to 17% in 2011. Some of the smaller Christian denominations increased over this period - there was an increase for those identifying with Pentecostal from 1.0% of the population in 2001 to 1.1% in 2011. However, the actual number of people reporting this religion increased by one-fifth.

## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

Religion	Population		Proportion born overseas(a)
	'000	%	%
Christian	13 150.6	61.1	22.9
Catholic	5 439.2	25.3	24.0
Anglican	3 680.0	17.1	17.5
Uniting Church	1 065.8	5.0	11.4
Presbyterian and Reformed	599.5	2.8	26.3
Eastern Orthodox	563.1	2.6	43.6
Baptist	352.5	1.6	28.8
Lutheran	251.9	1.2	24.5
Pentecostal	238.0	1.1	32.6
Other Christian	960.7	4.5	31.0
Non-Christian	1 546.3	7.2	67.0
Buddhism	529.0	2.5	69.4
Islam	476.3	2.2	61.5
Hinduism	275.5	1.3	84.3
Judaism	97.3	0.5	48.9
Other non-Christian	168.2	0.8	57.2
No Religion	4 796.8	22.3	22.5
<b>Total(b)</b>	<b>21 507.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26.1</b>

(a) Proportion of people reporting this religion who were born overseas.

(b) Total includes inadequately described (supplementary codes) religions and people who did not state a religion.

Between 2001 and 2011, the number of people reporting a non-Christian faith increased considerably, from around 0.9 million to 1.5 million, accounting for 7.2% of the total population in 2011 (up from 4.9% in 2001). The most common non-Christian religions in 2011 were Buddhism (accounting for 2.5% of the population), Islam (2.2%) and Hinduism (1.3%). Of these, Hinduism had experienced the fastest growth since 2001, increasing by 189% to 275,500, followed by Islam (increased by 69% to 476,300) and Buddhism (increased by 48% to 529,000 people).

The number of people reporting 'No Religion' also increased strongly, from 15% of the population in 2001 to 22% in 2011. This is most evident amongst younger people, with 28% of people aged 15-34 reporting they had no religious affiliation.

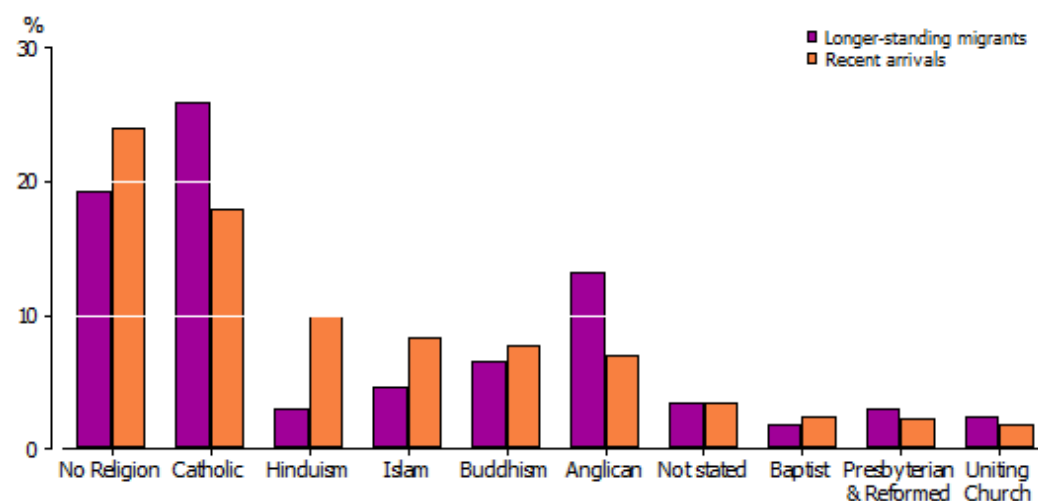
Over half of the overseas-born population (56%) reported a Christian denomination; the two most commonly reported were Catholicism (24%) and Anglicanism (12%). Non-Christian religions were reported by 19% of the overseas-born population, with Buddhism (6.8%), Islam (5.4%) and Hinduism (4.3%) being the most prevalent. The proportion of the overseas-born population who reported 'No religion' was 20%, slightly lower than the level for the Australian population as a whole (22%).

Recent arrivals were less likely than longer-standing migrants to report an affiliation to Catholicism (18% and 26% respectively) and Anglicanism (7% and 13% respectively). In contrast, a higher



proportion of recent arrivals reported Hinduism (10.0% compared to 3.0%), Islam (8.4% compared to 4.7%) and Buddhism (7.7% compared to 6.6%). These differences reflect the larger number of new arrivals from non-European countries. New arrivals were also more likely than longer-standing migrants to report 'No Religion' (24% compared to 19%).

### Selected religions - longer-standing and recently arrived migrants(a)



(a) Total includes inadequately described (supplementary codes) religions.

## LANGUAGE

In 2011, 81% of Australians aged 5 years and over, spoke only English at home while 2% didn't speak English at all. The most common languages spoken at home (other than English) were Mandarin (1.7%), Italian (1.5%), Arabic (1.4%), Cantonese (1.3%) and Greek (1.3%).

### TOP 10 LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME(a)(b)

Language spoken at home	Persons '000	Proportion of total population %	Proportion who spoke English very well %	Proportion born in Australia %
English only	15 394.7	80.7	..	83.8
Mandarin	319.5	1.7	37.5	9.0
Italian	295.0	1.5	62.1	43.2
Arabic	264.4	1.4	61.9	38.5
Cantonese	254.7	1.3	46.4	19.9
Greek	243.3	1.3	65.0	54.1
Vietnamese	219.8	1.2	39.5	27.9
Spanish	111.4	0.6	62.1	21.9
Hindi	104.9	0.5	80.2	9.8
Tagalog	79.0	0.4	66.9	5.9

(a) Excludes persons aged under 5 years.

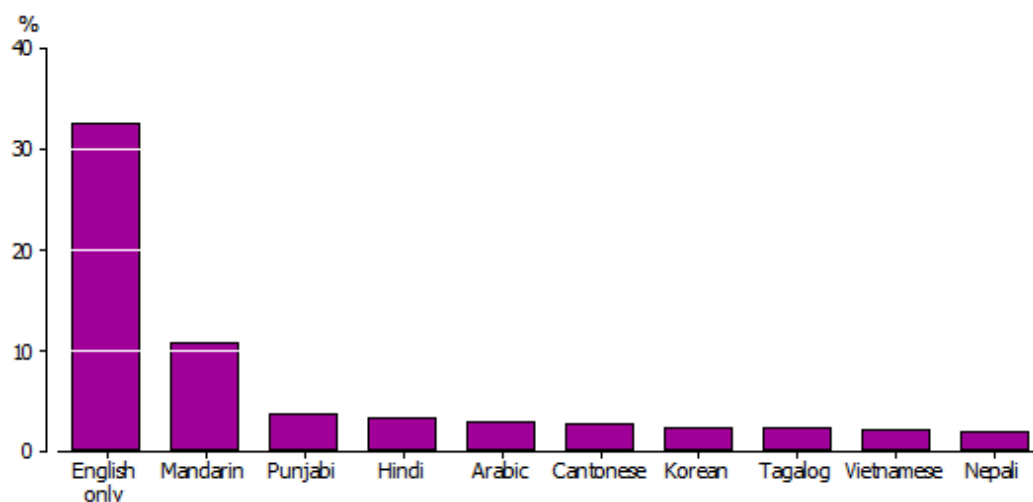
(b) Proportion of people reporting this language who were born in Australia.

Almost half (49%) of longer-standing migrants and 67% of recent arrivals spoke a language other than English at home. This probably reflects the main countries of birth for these two groups and also the amount of time spent in Australia. However, this doesn't provide any indication of their ability to speak English. Over half (51%) of longer-standing migrants reported speaking English very well, while 2.6% reported not speaking English at all. For recent arrivals, 43% reported speaking English very well and the proportion who reported not speaking English at all was 3.1%.

First generation Australians had the highest proportion of people who spoke a language other than English at home (53%). It was much lower for second generation Australians (20%) and the third-

plus generation (1.6%). The most commonly spoken languages for longer-standing migrants, who spoke a language other than English at home, were Mandarin (4.3%), Cantonese (4.2%), Italian (3.7%) and Vietnamese (3.2%). For recent arrivals, the languages spoken at home varied from those for longer-standing migrants and the overseas-born population as a whole. Just under a third (32.6%) of newly arrived migrants aged 5 years and over spoke only English at home. This was followed by Mandarin (10.8%), Punjabi (3.7%), Hindi (3.3%) and Arabic (3.0%).

### Languages spoken at home by recent arrivals(a)(b)



(a) Excludes those aged under 5 years.

(b) Arrived between 2007 and Census Night (9 August) 2011.

### Endnotes

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2004, 'Where do the Overseas-born population live?' in **Australian Social Trends**, cat. no. 4102.0, viewed: 18 May 2012, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4102.0>>.

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2. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, **Booklet 6, General Skilled Migration**, viewed: 24 April 2012, <[www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)>.

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3. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010, **Migration, Australia, 2009-10**, cat. no. 3412.0, viewed: 18 May 2012, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3412.0Main+Features12009-10>>.

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### Notes

**Australian** - In this article, the term Australian refers to all people living in Australia for one year or more at the time of the 2011 Census.

**Capital cities** - In this article the term 'capital cities' refers to Greater Capital Cities Statistical Areas. These areas are based on a broad economic definition of capital cities and incorporate some areas on the fringes of cities which were not included in previous classifications. Capital cities in this article may therefore be defined differently than in published data from previous Censuses. Further information on Greater Capital Cities Statistical Areas can be found in **Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2011** (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001).

**Countries of birth** - Respondents were asked to state their country of birth on the 2011 Census form. These responses were coded using the **Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC) Second Edition, Revision 1** (cat. no. 1269.0).

The SACC is based on the concept of geographic proximity. It groups neighbouring countries into progressively broader geographic areas based on similar social, cultural, economic and political characteristics.

The classification contains three levels:

- The third level consists of the base units (countries).
- The second level comprises minor groups, which are groups of neighbouring countries similar in terms of social, cultural, economic and political characteristics.
- The first level comprises major groups which are formed by aggregating geographically proximate minor groups.

When referring to broad areas in this article countries were aggregated at the second and first levels:

- Asia is comprised of '5. South-East Asia', '6. North-East Asia' and '7. Southern and Central Asia'.
- Europe is comprised of '2. North-West Europe' and '3. Southern and Eastern Europe'.

**Sex ratio** - When calculating the highest and lowest sex ratios for the overseas-born population, groups with less than 5,000 people in Australia were excluded.

**Ancestry (as a proportion of total population)** - Persons who did not state an ancestry were excluded prior to the calculation of percentages in this article. This differs slightly from the article 'Cultural Diversity Overview' in **A Picture of the Nation: the Statistician's Report on the 2006 Census** (cat. no. 2070.0) as persons who did not state an ancestry were included when calculating the 'proportion of the total population' who stated each ancestry.

**China** - For the purposes of this article 'China' is defined as excluding Special Administrative Regions and the Taiwan Province. The Special Administrative Regions include Hong Kong and Macau.

**Not stated** - Where classifications used included a 'not stated' category, data in this category have been excluded prior to the calculation of percentages—in effect, this has 'distributed' those results across the remaining categories. The only exception to this is for the Religious Affiliation classification, where 'not stated' is an accepted response. Therefore proportions may differ from other published data.

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